



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Shanley · Lourdes · 1961 - 8990

Phil
6990
3-29

HD WIDENER



HW S7FE R

Phil 6990.3.29

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918

Wren

Phil 6970.3.29

The Story OF Lourdes

W

BY
REV. WALTER J. SHANLEY

0

THE STORY OF LOURDES

BY THE
REV. WALTER J. SHANLEY

PRESS OF
THE CATHOLIC TRANSCRIPT,
HARTFORD, CONN.

6110.2.19
HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

Nihil Obstat.

JOHN SYNNOTT, V. G.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur.

✠ MICHAEL TIERNEY.
Bishop of Hartford.

May 25, 1908.

COPYRIGHT, 1908, BY WALTER J. SHANLEY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Grotto. First Apparition.	9
II.	Colloquy between Bernadette and the Apparition, Bernadette in Ecstasy,	13
III.	Bernadette's Arrest and Examination by the Im- perial Procurator. Forbidden to Visit Massa- bielle,	17
IV.	Bernadette Directed to have a Shrine Erected at the Grotto. Eight Thousand People Witness Ber- nadette in Ecstasy.	22
V.	Miraculous Spring. Cure of a Quarryman, . . .	26
VI.	Caution Displayed by Bishop and Pastor. Mary Declares Her Name.	31
VII.	Bishop of Tarbes Names Commission of Investiga- tion. Authoritative Decision,	37
VIII.	Bernadette Visited by Thousands. Details of the Apparitions,	43
IX.	Bernadette becomes a Nun. Sufferings and Death,	48
X.	The Shrine. Processions.	55

Foreword

This brochure is a reprint of articles which appeared in the "Catholic Transcript." Its purpose is to diffuse a wider knowledge of the history of the apparitions of the Lourdes, and thereby to propagate a greater devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God. It is issued in the golden jubilee year, the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions of the Lourdes, when the Catholic world is attracted to Lourdes, and to its solemn celebration of Mary's visits to the Grotto of Massabielle.

The treatise is purposely brief, in order to enable the reader to grasp the principal features of the apparitions without the labor of lengthy perusal. The author availed himself of a sojourn at Lourdes to study documentary evidence of the apparitions, and to collect materials for an authentic narrative. He declares that in all the opinions expressed in this work, he conforms to the decree of Urban VIII., and has no intention of prejudging the decisions of the Church.

W. J. S.

Danbury, Conn.,
Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, May 24, 1908.

CHAPTER I

THE GROTTO—FIRST APPARITION

Nestled among the foothills of the rugged, towering Pyrenees, which form a picturesque wall on France's southern frontier, lies the village of Lourdes, the most celebrated shrine in the world. An obscure village, it has risen to prominence during the past half century, and will for all time be regarded as one of the most favored spots on earth.

Here in 1858, the Mother of God appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, a young shepherdess, who belonged to an humble, poor family. Here miracles innumerable have been wrought through the intercession of her, whom the Church calls: "Virgin most powerful."

The obscurity of Lourdes was no bar to marvelous divine operation, but rather an attraction. The poverty of the Soubirous family was a motive for Heaven's choice of Bernadette as an instrument of the divine liberality. In all ages the poor have been the objects of the predilection of Heaven.

The scene of the apparitions of the Mother of God, was a grotto situated outside of the town of Lourdes, towards the west. In a wall of rocks rising to a height of sixty-five feet, called Massabielle, or old rocks, there is a cave about twelve feet high and of

the same depth. Nature has hollowed a niche at a height of six feet in the right side of the cave. This lonely, unfrequented spot was chosen by the Almighty for the manifestation of the tenderness, mercy, power and goodness of His Virgin Mother. Here in February, 1858, Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous.

Bernadette, who was about fourteen years of age, was a delicate child, afflicted with asthma from early childhood. She spent most of her time tending sheep. She was dull rather than bright, and had no exterior qualities of a noticeable character. But she had more. She was innocent, conscientious, and devoted to prayer. By means of the rosary she constantly appealed to the Mother of God, who loved her for her innocent life and tender devotion.

Before noon on the 11th of February, 1858, Bernadette was sent to gather fire-wood, as her mother had no fuel to prepare the scanty noonday meal for the family. In company with her sister Marie and another girl, she went to the banks of the river, which flows near the base of the grotto. In quest of drift-wood, Bernadette wandered a short distance from her companions, towards the grotto. Suddenly she heard a noise which resembled a strong wind. She looked in the direction of the niche whence the sound came, but saw nothing. Its repetition attracted her attention

a second time. The spectacle which met her gaze, struck awe into the very depths of her soul. She sank on her knees, looking intently at the niche, which was illuminated by a bright light. In the midst of the light, appeared a woman of heavenly beauty. Youthful, of medium height, she was clothed in a long, white trailing robe, and wore a light blue girdle, which knotted at her waist, fell in two long bands. A white veil covered her head and shoulders, and descended to her feet, which were adorned by two roses of brilliant gold. In her hands, which were clasped, she held a long rosary, the beads of which were whiter than pearl and were joined by a chain of brightest gold. Goodness, tenderness, bliss, ineffable beauty and majesty, shone forth from her countenance, and powerfully attracted the child.

The apparition regarded Bernadette with tenderness, and slipped the beads through her fingers, as if reciting the rosary. Bernadette attempted to raise her hand to make the sign of the cross, but failed. The Virgin, as if to inspire her with courage and confidence, made a large sign of the cross. The child imitated the apparition, and recited the rosary. She had but finished when the apparition disappeared leaving the niche empty, cold and grey as it had been an hour previous.

Bernadette returned to her companions, who had

seen her praying, but did not count it extraordinary. "Have you seen anything?" she asked them. "No," they replied, "have you seen anything?" She was loth to acquaint them with the wonderful favor that had been accorded her, and replied: "If you have seen nothing, I have nothing to tell you." On their way to their home, Bernadette was very much preoccupied. Marie and Jeanne asked her to tell them what she had seen. After repeated urging she described the vision, enjoining them to keep it secret. But Marie had scarcely crossed the threshold of her home, when she gave her mother all the details of the apparition. Madame Soubirous regarded the matter lightly and forbade Bernadette to return to the grotto. On the following Sunday after the children had attended mass, Bernadette asked Marie and Jeanne to beg her mother to withdraw her prohibition. At first the mother objected, but finally yielded to their earnest request. Bernadette's companions, fearing that the vision might be something wicked, procured some holy water. Their plan was to sprinkle the holy water towards the vision and to say: "If you come from God approach, if you come from the devil, depart." They imparted this recommendation to Bernadette.

CHAPTER. II

COLLOQUY BETWEEN BERNADETTE AND THE APPARITION
—BERNADETTE IN ECSTASY

On reaching the grotto Bernadette knelt and began to recite the rosary. Suddenly her face shone resplendent, her gaze became fixed on the niche in the rock. "Look," she exclaimed, "she is there." But the childrens' eyes were withheld, they saw only the cold, grey rock. Bernadette, remembering the recommendation of her companions, took the vial of holy water, and sprinkled some drops, saying:—"If you come from God, approach." The Virgin Mother smiling, bowed her head several times, and advanced to the edge of the niche. Bernadette did not dare pronounce the rest of the formula: "If you come from the devil, depart." She knew that the vision of ineffable beauty was from Heaven. Kneeling again she recited the rosary, and the apparition disappeared.

The tidings of the apparitions spread throughout Lourdes and the surrounding towns. Various opinions were expressed, many regarding the visions as vagaries of a child's imagination. But no one could doubt Bernadette's sincerity. Her answers to questions were always clear, straightforward, and emphatic.

Two pious women of Lourdes besought Bernadette to ask the lady who she was and what she wanted. They were Antoinette Peyret, a member of the Sodality of the Children of Mary, and Madame Millet. They suggested that the lady be requested to make herself known and her purpose, in writing. With this in view they brought pen, ink and paper on the following day, when they accompanied Bernadette to the grotto, having heard the half-past five o'clock mass in the parish church.

Bernadette in her eagerness to reach the favored spot, outstripped the others and arrived before them. She knelt and began the recitation of the beads. Suddenly she exclaimed:

"She is there, she makes a sign for me to advance."

Bernadette went forward, and asked, at the request of the others, if they might remain. Receiving an affirmative answer, the two women knelt and lighted a wax candle, thus indicating their belief in the supernatural character of the vision. Bernadette approached the apparition, and taking the pen, ink and paper, held them up and said:

"O Lady, if you have anything to communicate to me, would you have the kindness to inform me in writing who you are and what you want?"

The Blessed Virgin smiled and said: "There is no occasion to commit to writing what I have to tell

you. Only do me the favor to come here every day for fifteen days."

"I promise you this," replied Bernadette.

The Virgin Mother smiled her pleasure, and said: "And I promise to render you happy, not in this world, but in the other world."

Bernadette returned to the place where her companions knelt which she had left, when the Virgin bade her advance.

"She is gazing at you at this moment," said Bernadette to Antoinette Peyret.

At the instance of her companions Bernadette asked if they might accompany her every day during the fifteen days.

"They may return with you," said the Blessed Virgin, "and others, also; I wish to see many persons here."

Then she disappeared, leaving the niche clothed in light, which gradually melted away. Bernadette noticed that at these apparitions the light appeared first and then Our Blessed Lady, and at the end of the vision she disappeared first and then the light.

Bernadette related to her parents all that had transpired, the request of the apparition, and her promise to visit the grotto every day for fifteen days.

Her companions described her appearance during the vision, her ecstasy, her transfigured countenance,

radiant and dazzling, reflecting the heavenly beauty, which her eyes drank in with admiration, expressed in her parted lips. Her parents began to believe that there was something supernatural in the visions, and accompanied her to the grotto. Here they saw her entranced, radiant, her eyes fixed in admiration, the expression of her face, angelic. Hundreds surrounded her, and on Sunday the 21st day of February, the third of the fifteen days, thousands congregated to see the privileged child in contemplation of the heavenly vision.

The Mother of God smiled at the child and saluted her by a graceful bow and gesture of her hand. As the vision drew back into the interior of the niche, and assumed a sad, sorrowful expression, Bernadette asked: "What is the matter? What must be done." The Blessed Virgin seemed to look out over the whole world, and then looking at Bernadette she said: "Pray for sinners." Two large tears rolled down from Bernadette's wide open eyes and remained on her cheeks. Happiness soon reappeared on her countenance, as Mary's resumed its joyful expression, just before she disappeared.

The news of these wondrous happenings spread like wildfire through the hill country, and along the valleys in the vicinity of Lourdes. The simple word of a poor shepherdess had aroused the people for

miles on all sides. In the clubs and cafes, in the workshops and markets, in the mansions of the great and in the cabins of the poor, on the public squares, on the highways and byways, among clergy and laity, learned and illiterate, night and day, the all absorbing topic was Bernadette and the apparitions.

Different and widely divergent opinions were expressed, and whilst many reserved judgment, there were those who boldly denounced the affair as an imposture, or sought to explain it on physical or psychological grounds, eliminating the supernatural element entirely. The clergy prudently kept aloof, refrained from appearing among the multitudes at the grotto, and wisely waited for developments.

CHAPTER III

BERNADETTE'S ARREST AND EXAMINATION BY THE IMPERIAL PROCURATOR—FORBIDDEN TO VISIT MASSABIELLE

The spirit of evil is ever alert to thwart the works of God. He is ingenious and skilful in using human agents to nullify supernatural influences in society.

On the morning of February 21st, after Bernadette returned from the grotto, she was arrested, and brought before the Imperial Procurator.

The mayor of the city, the Imperial Procurator, and the Commissary of police had determined to put

an end to the assemblages at the grotto. The means which they decided to employ was to prevent by persuasion or threat Bernadette's visits to the grotto. They were confident that the child would not resist the recommendations of authority, much less the mandates of the officials of the government.

The Imperial Procurator was a dignified personage, firm and absolute in his opinions. He judged that it would be an easy task to overcome any opposition which Bernadette might exert. He was astounded and discomfited by her coolness and simplicity, and found that his ability and power were no match for the sincerity and truthfulness of this ignorant, weak girl. He questioned her closely concerning the apparitions for an hour. She told her experience in a simple, frank, straightforward manner. The Procurator took notes, and when she had finished her recital, he questioned her on minute details of her statement, in order to confuse her, but failed in every instance. He imputed to her statements which she did not make, but she corrected him, emphatically denied the false rendition, and reiterated her true story. Despite his ingratiating manner, his intimidation and threats, the crafty official was beaten. Brusquely ending the cross examination, he asked Bernadette:

"Do you promise me that you will not return to the grotto?"

"Sir," she replied, "I cannot promise you, I have promised the Lady to return there."

"If you do not promise to return no more to Massabielle, I will send for the police and put you in prison."

A large crowd had assembled outside, and all were loud in their denunciation of Bernadette's arrest. Her father forced his way through the crowd, and entered the office of the Procurator. A poor peasant, he stood in awe of the representative of the State's authority. The astute Procurator noticed the timidity of the poor miller, and took advantage of his discomfiture, by threatening him with prosecution if he did not forbid his child to visit the grotto. Francois Soubirous promised and both were dismissed. Accordingly Bernadette was forbidden to visit Massabielle.

"If you visit the grotto," said her father, "M. Jacomet will put both of us in prison. Do not go there any more."

Bernadette was perplexed as to what course she should pursue. She had promised the Lady to visit the grotto for fifteen days, but her father forbade her to go again. On the next day, Monday, February 22, she went to school in compliance with the injunction of her parents. Here she met contradictions, which taxed her patience and humility. The scholars rallied her about the visions and reproached her; the nuns,

who did not believe in the reality of the apparitions, chided her.

The Lord had inundated her soul with consolation on the preceding day, now He sent her humiliations.

At the close of the morning session, Bernadette, longing to go to the grotto, but mindful of her parents' prohibition, slowly wended her way homewards.

As the Angelus bell rang out of the tower of the parish church, she was seized by an irresistible power which forced her steps to the grotto, as a leaf is driven before the autumn wind. A large number had assembled. The child took her accustomed place, knelt, and began her rosary. But her countenance did not take on any sign of ecstasy, and when she arose from her kneeling posture, she announced that the Lady had not appeared. The sceptics among the crowd, who had derided the belief in the apparitions rallied her and laughing loud, said:

"The Lady is afraid of the police."

"Other days," replied the child, "I saw her as I see you, and we conversed together."

With a sad heart she returned home. As soon as she crossed the threshold, her father asked her whence she came,

"From the grotto," she replied, and described the superior force that urged her against her will. Her father who placed absolute trust in her every statement

believed her, withdrew his prohibition, and left her free to return to the grotto..

The next day M. Estrade, who had been present at Bernadette's examination in the Procurator's office, visited the grotto in the company of his sister. He was a government official, a sceptic, and his appearance at the grotto had no other reason than curiosity. About two hundred persons were present, among them four distinguished personages of Lourdes. M. Estrade saw Bernadette in her seventh ecstasy. After kneeling she was seen to move the beads of her rosary through her fingers.

She raised her eyes towards the rock with an expression of interrogation, which evidenced her longing desire to see the vision. Suddenly her countenance assumed an expression of admiration. Her eyes brightened, and seemed riveted to the niche in the rock. Sighs escaped from her lips, and indefinable grace marked her posture and every gesture. Spontaneously, by a concerted movement, all who were present uncovered and inclined their heads.

After her first transports of joy, Bernadette assumed the attitude of one listening. Her gestures and manner took on a sacred character.

At times she gave sign of approval by bowing her head, when it seemed that she was replying to a

question. When the vision spoke Bernadette wore an expression of happiness; when she made supplication, her attitude changed to one of sadness and deep humility, and she seemed almost moved to tears. At intervals it was evident that the conversation was suspended. Then the child recited the rosary with her eyes fixed on the rock.

M. Estrade, who had ridiculed the simple faith of those who believed that the apparitions were genuine, was powerfully moved by the sight of Bernadette in ecstasy. From a sceptic he became a devout client of Our Lady of Lourdes, and at the instance of Cardinal Langenieux, published in 1869 a history of the apparitions of Lourdes.

CHAPTER IV

BERNADETTE DIRECTED TO HAVE A SHRINE ERECTED AT THE GROTTA—EIGHT THOUSAND PEOPLE WITNESS BERNADETTE IN ECSTASY

The repeated apparitions of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette gradually developed in the child faith and confidence, and prepared the minds of the people for the wondrous events which followed.

At dawn on Tuesday, February 23, 1858, Bernadette arrived at the grotto, and made her way through a crowd of about eight thousand people who had

assembled to witness her ecstasy. She knelt in her usual place, bearing in her right hand a rosary, in her left a lighted taper.

Whilst reciting the beads the vision appeared, and called her by name, "Bernadette!"

"Here I am," replied the child.

"I have a secret to tell you for yourself only, which concerns you alone; do you promise me never to reveal it to any one?"

"I promise you," answered Bernadette.

The Blessed Virgin also taught her a prayer which she recited in subsequent apparitions, but never revealed it to any one.

"And now, my daughter," said Mary, "go and tell the priests that a shrine must be erected here, and that they ought to come here in procession." Then the vision disappeared.

The people crowded around Bernadette and asked her what the apparition had said. Bernadette was surprised that they did not hear her voice.

"What, did you not hear?" she asked. "The lady spoke aloud, she had such a sweet voice."

Bernadette quickly passed into the town, and directed her steps to the presbytery, to deliver her message to the pastor. The Abbe Peyramale recognized Bernadette immediately.

"Are you not Bernadette?" he asked her.

"Yes, it is I, Father," she replied.

"Well, Bernadette, what do you want from me?" he asked, with coldness which was almost severe.

"I come, Father, on the part of the lady, who appeared at the grotto of Massabielle."

"Do you know the lady's name?" asked the pastor.

"No, she did not tell me who she was."

"Those who believe you," said the pastor, "imagine that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary. But beware; you say that you alone have seen her, if you falsely pretend to see her in the grotto, you may never see her in Heaven."

"I do not know if it is the Blessed Virgin," replied the child, "but I see the vision as I see you, and she speaks to me as truly as you speak to me, and I come to tell you that she wishes a shrine to be built to her at the rocks of Massabielle, where she appeared to me."

Father Peyramale made her repeat the words addressed to her by the apparition. "After having told me a secret which I cannot tell anyone, the lady added: 'And now go and tell the priests that a shrine must be erected here, and that the people come in procession to it.'"

The priest reflected for a moment, and then told Bernadette that he had no proof that such a message was given to her, nor did he know who the lady

might be. "The vision," you say, "appeared on a wild rose bush, an eglantine, which issues from the rock. It is February; tell her from me to make the rose bush bloom, if she wishes a shrine built."

At daybreak, the next day, Bernadette reached the grotto, and oblivious of the crowd, knelt and began the recitation of the rosary. Scarcely had she begun to pray when her face became illumined by a reflected light. Majesty clothed her, and characterized her every gesture. Her face assumed an expression of incomparable sweetness and joy. All at once she was seen to kiss the ground, to move on her knees up the ascent in front of the grotto, to enter and drag herself towards the niche, at the same time, saying, "Penance! penance! penance!"

As Bernadette repeatedly kissed the ground the vision drew back in the niche, Bernadette following till she came so near that she could touch the vision by raising her hand. Turning to the assembled multitude, the child motioned them to kiss the ground, but they failed to interpret her meaning. With an authoritative gesture she placed her finger on her lips, then quickly pointed to the ground, indicating plainly that they, too, were to kiss the ground.

Shortly afterwards Bernadette left the grotto, and directing her steps towards the town, soon appeared at the house of the pastor of Lourdes. Father Peyramale asked her if she saw the vision again.

"I have seen the vision," she answered, "and I said to her: 'Our pastor asks you to furnish some proofs, for instance to make the rose bush under your own feet blossom, because my word does not suffice for the priests and they will not trust me.' Then she smiled, but said nothing. Afterwards she told me to pray for sinners, and commanded me to come up to the end of the grotto. She said three times: 'Penance! penance! penance!' I repeated these words, as I dragged myself on my knees to the end of the grotto. There she revealed to me a second secret, which concerns myself alone. She then disappeared."

"What did you find at the end of the grotto?" asked the pastor.

"Whilst she is there I notice nothing but herself. After she disappeared I looked, but saw nothing but the rock and on the ground a few blades of grass."

"Let us wait," said the prudent pastor.

CHAPTER V

MIRACULOUS SPRING—CURE OF A QUARRYMAN

The Blessed Virgin introduced her colloquy with Bernadette on Thursday, Feb. 25, by imparting a third secret to her.

"My daughter, I wish to confide to you, for yourself alone, a last secret; like the other two, you are

not to reveal it to anyone in the world." After a brief interval of silence, Mary added: "And now go and drink from, and wash yourself in the fountain and eat of the herb which is growing there."

Bernadette had not seen a fountain in the grotto. There had never been a spring there. The ground was arid, broken by rocks, which reached to the very roof of the cavern.

The child keeping her eyes on the vision, directed her steps to the Gave, whose waters were rushing by the grotto. The Virgin called her back, and made a sign with her finger to go to the dry corner, to the right of the grotto.

"Do not go there," she said. "I did not tell you to drink at the Gave; go to the fountain, it is here."

Bernadette obeyed, but saw no water. Along the very ground, on which she stood, she had dragged herself on her knees, on the previous day, praying for sinners, in compliance with the injunction of the apparition.

Not knowing the location of the spring, the child raised her head towards the Blessed Virgin, to ask her. Then, as if obeying a sign, she stooped, and dug with her little hands a hole in the sand. The cavity filled with water. She looked at it for a moment, then washed her face with the water, took some blades of grass and ate them.

A large crowd witnessed the different phases of this strange spectacle with keen interest, and amazement. When the child arose to return to her accustomed place, her face was still marked by the muddy water.

A cry of pity arose from the assemblage: "Bernadette has lost her reason."

She knelt and began her rosary without any recognition of the exclamation which she heard. Her face assumed an expression of ineffable happiness as she contemplated the celestial vision.

The crowd melted away, believing that Bernadette was laboring under a delusion. The child left almost alone continued her prayers under the eyes of her whom she loved, till about seven o'clock, when the vision disappeared.

Bernadette made the large sign of the cross, which she had learned from the Mother of God, with a piety, dignity and majesty which is not of this world, and wended her way towards the town.

In the afternoon of the same day, several who visited the grotto, were surprised to see a small stream of water descending from the rocks. The rivulet developed hour by hour, increased in volume, till it gave eighty-five quarts a minute. The news of the sudden appearance of a spring in the grotto spread like wildfire, and caused a sensation in Lourdes.

The people hurried in crowds to the rocks of Massabielle to verify the report. It was there; gushing forth from the rocks where water had never been, a stream as large as a child's arm flowed on to the Gave.

This was the sign, which Mary chose to give, not a mere sign, but a source of innumerable blessings for distressed humanity, a fountain of healing, by which thousands afflicted, with every type of disease, were to be cured, in the coming years. The water was carefully analyzed by capable chemists, and found to be a pure, natural water devoid of any mineral ingredients.

The inhabitants of the surrounding towns had learned of the miraculous occurrence, and poured into Lourdes, gathering in large crowds at the grotto before sunrise on the following morning.

Bernadette arrived as usual and repaired to the spot hallowed by her prayers and ecstasy. She showed no surprise at the rivulet that coursed between the rocks and flowed down to the Gave. She knelt and recited her rosary. Having finished, she arose, her face indicating sadness and disappointment. In reply to questions put by spectators, she declared with tears that the lady did not appear. In grievous disappointment and humiliation she retired to her home, crying as she went.

Mary, who had favored Bernadette in an exceptional manner, wished to keep her humble. The appearance of the miraculous spring had turned the tide of popular emotion in her favor. She was regarded as a saint. Her every word was eagerly received and treasured. Mary wished to keep her humble, and withheld her presence on the day following the appearance of the miraculous spring.

On that very day a miracle was operated through the virtue of the miraculous water. A quarryman named Louis Bouriette had been injured twenty years before, by an explosion in a mine. His brother was killed, and he was for a time at death's door from the injuries which he sustained. His right eye was so seriously affected that he could not distinguish a man from a tree. Having learned of the miraculous spring, he sent his daughter for some of the water, saying that "if it is the Blessed Virgin who appears at the grotto, she can obtain the cure for me." His daughter returning with some of the water, said to him: "It is muddy water, father."

"Never mind," he replied, and began to pray at the same time applying the water to the injured eye.

Suddenly he cried out with joy that he was cured.

The next day he met, in the public square of the town, Dr. Dozous, who had attended him for years, and acquainted him with the cure.

"Impossible," said the Doctor, "the remedies which I prescribed were only to relieve the pain. Your disease is incurable."

"It is not you, but the Blessed Virgin of the grotto, who has cured me," replied Bouriette.

"I will believe you," rejoined the physician, "If you will read this," handing him a piece of paper on which were written the words: "Bouriette has an incurable amaurosis, and he will never be cured."

Bouriette read it without the least difficulty.

The Doctor could not but pronounce the cure a miracle. All the scars of the wound remained as an evidence of the injury.

CHAPTER VI

CAUTION DISPLAYED BY BISHOP AND PASTOR—MARY DECLARES HER NAME

On Tuesday, March 2, 1858, Bernadette called on the pastor of Lourdes, and repeated the request made by the apparition that a shrine be built, and that the people come to the grotto in procession. The apparition had not yet declared her name. The fountain which had gushed forth from the rocks of Massabielle and the wonderful miracles that had been operated, clearly indicated that it was the Mother of God.

"I believe you," said the Abbe Peyramale to Bernadette, "but what you ask in the name of the apparition, does not depend on me; it depends on the Bishop, whom I have already apprised of what is taking place. I will go and acquaint him with this new application. It is for him to act."

Mgr. Lawrence, the Bishop of Tarbes, was too well versed in the history of the Church to doubt the possibility of the facts presented to him by the pastor of Lourdes. His personal views may have been in their favor, but as a Bishop, prudence required him to follow the course generally pursued by the Church in similar cases and reserve judgment until a judicial investigation would be held, and the occurrences at the grotto proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Nor did he institute an official inquiry immediately. He waited for events to develop, and the excitement resultant from the miraculous cures, to abate. The Catholic Church is very slow to act in cases of this nature, and discountenances hasty and impulsive action.

Bernadette had been requested to come to the grotto for fifteen days.

The last day arrived. Nearly twenty thousand assembled at the grotto. Never had such a multitude gathered within the borders of Lourdes. They expected some extraordinary event on this day.

Bernadette heard mass as usual, and afterwards repaired to the grotto. As she approached the hallowed spot she was preceded by a gendarme, who cleared a way through the crowd. She knelt in her usual place, and the multitude knelt with her. In a few moments she was in ecstasy. She kissed the ground for the conversion of sinners, and drank from the fountain as usual.

She asked the apparition to tell her name, but received no reply. Bernadette saluted the vision with a grace and dignity, which she had learned from the Mother of God, and all was over. No special occurrence had marked this apparition.

In the afternoon, at about four o'clock, six hundred persons were praying at the grotto and drinking at the fountain. Suddenly a woman appeared with an infant, two years old, in her arms. She plunged the child into the icy water of the spring, and held it there for fifteen minutes calling on the Mother of God to cure it. The bystanders endeavored to prevent her, thinking that she would kill the child.

"Let me alone," she cried, "I want to do what I can and the good God and the Holy Virgin will do the rest."

Believing that she was crazed with grief, and that the child was already dead, they permitted her to hold the body of the infant in the icy water, which would

kill a healthy child in five minutes. The child, whose name was Justin, had been subject to slow fever from his birth, and was supposed to be dying of consumption. A charitable neighbor had prepared his shroud. As if by a sudden inspiration, his mother snatched him from the cradle, ran to the grotto, and plunged him into the fountain, praying to Mary to cure him. After fifteen minutes he was taken from the water, livid and frozen, and carried to his home.

"He is dead," said the father.

"No," answered the mother, "he is not dead, the Blessed Virgin will restore him to us."

Shortly after she bent over the child in the cradle.

"He breathes," she exclaimed.

The father rushed to the cradle and saw immediately that the child was sleeping peacefully.

Little Justin slept on during the night, and awoke next morning, bright and vigorous. Although he had never been able to walk he manifested an inclination to get out of the cradle, but his mother would not permit him. He took nourishment almost greedily. The following morning his parents went out to the fields to work, leaving the child asleep. After a short interval the mother returned and found that her little boy had left the cradle, and was toddling through the room, going from chair to chair, laughing, evidently delighted at his new experience. Seeing

his mother he ran to her, and threw himself into her arms.

This miracle caused a great sensation in Lourdes. Three skilled physicians attested the truth of the extraordinary cure. They made deposition that the immersion of the child in the cold water, was sufficient to produce death in a healthy child.

Bernadette continued to visit the grotto every day. She recited her rosary, and performed her accustomed penance for the conversion of sinners, but the Virgin did not appear. On March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, she felt strongly drawn to the grotto. She recognized the interior call, and responded promptly. A large number had assembled on account of the feast, out of devotion and with a hope of witnessing a new manifestation of Mary's mercy and power. Bernadette began the recitation of the rosary, and suddenly was in an ecstasy, her radiant face and happy expression indicating that she was favored with another vision of the heavenly Visitant. Previously Bernadette had requested the vision to tell her name. Now she repeated the inquiry.

"O Lady," she said, "will you have the goodness to tell me who you are and what is your name?"

A benign smile was the only answer.

Again Bernadette entreated: "O Lady will you tell me who you are?"

The apparition was silent.

"O Lady, I entreat you to tell me who you are, you must tell me who you are," was Bernadette's third petition.

The Virgin smiled again at Bernadette, and withdrawing her eyes from the child, gliding on her arm the rosary which she had held in her joined hands, elevating her hands, and her head, then joining her hands before her breast, her head inclined back, her eyes raised to Heaven, she said:

"I am the Immaculate Conception."

In this attitude she disappeared without the usual farewell salutation to the child.

Bernadette did not understand the name by which Mary announced herself. She repaired immediately to the pastor's house, repeating the words on the way, lest she might forget them.

The pastor understood, the whole world soon realized that it was the Virgin Mother of God, whom Pius IX. four years before, had declared Immaculate in her Conception.

CHAPTER VII

BISHOP OF TARDES NAMES COMMISSION OF
INVESTIGATION—AUTHORITATIVE DECISION

The declaration of the apparition that she was the Immaculate Conception merely confirmed Bernadette's belief, but did not add to her conviction, that it was the Mother of God, who appeared in the grotto. The lady of the grotto was in the child's eyes, the Queen of Heaven, to whom she addressed the prayers of the rosary. She never pronounced the name of Mary, in speaking of the apparitions, guided, it seemed, by a prudence which came from Heaven. Bernadette called her simply the lady. But after Mary had announced herself on the feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette no longer used the impersonal term lady, but Our Lady of the Grotto, or Our Lady of Massabielle.

Bernadette was favored with another apparition on Wednesday, April 7, of Easter week, 1858. Several authentic documents establish this date as April 7, although some writers give it as April 5. On this occasion a remarkable evidence of divine intervention was witnessed by a multitude.

Bernadette was kneeling, reciting the rosary with angelic fervor. She held her beads in her left hand

and with her right hand she supported a large lighted wax candle, which rested on the ground. In her ecstasy, she unwittingly placed her hand over the flame of the candle, which passed through her parted fingers. The bystanders were astounded as they noticed that she was unharmed by the flame of the candle, and insensible to it. 'Doctor Dozous, a physician of Lourdes, who was near her, took out his watch, and timed the miracle for a quarter of an hour. After the ecstasy, the physician asked her to show him her right hand, which he examined with great care. He could not find the least trace of a burn. He requested the person who had taken away the candle, to relight it and give it to him. Then he applied its flame several times to Bernadette's right hand, and immediately she exclaimed: "You burn me."

An interval of three months elapsed before the next and last apparition, which occurred on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16. Meanwhile Bernadette had received her first communion, and on the morning of the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel she was nourished with the bread of angels for the third or fourth time. In the afternoon of the same day, towards evening, she was praying in the parish church, when she heard the sweet voice of the Immaculate Virgin calling her to the grotto. Immediately she arose, and made her way thither.

The local authorities, instigated by the enemy, the prince of darkness, had placed a barricade before the grotto, and had forbidden all to enter. Bernadette avoided the prohibited ground, and went over to the opposite side of the river Gave. There she knelt, surrounded by a group of persons who had followed her. Almost as soon as she fixed her gaze on the rock, her face became illumined, and she cried out :

"Yes, yes, she is there. She salutes us, and smiles at us from behind the barriers."

Immediately that remarkable and intimate converse, which had marked the previous apparitions, began between the Blessed Virgin and Bernadette. In the midst of her bliss, the child seemed to make an effort to detach herself from the ground, and to throw herself into the arms of the Divine Mother.

Finally the moment approached when the Blessed Virgin was to disappear never to appear again on earth to her favored child. She did not afflict the heart of Bernadette by a final adieu, nor any intimation that she would not appear again. As the sun was slowly descending beneath the horizon, and the shadows of night were darkening the valley of Massabielle, the Mother of God cast a last glance of deep affection on the child, and then disappeared.

From March 25, a large number of persons were cured suddenly by contact with the water of the

miraculous spring. After a simple lotion, some recovered their sight, others their hearing, one the use of a paralyzed member, another an organic faculty destroyed by long disease.

On July 28, Mgr. Lawrence, the Bishop of the diocese, published in all the churches of his diocese, an ordinance constituting a commission charged with establishing the authenticity of the facts which occurred at the grotto. The commission was composed of nine members of the Cathedral Chapter, the superiors of the theological and preparatory seminaries, the superior of the missionaries of the diocese, the pastor of Lourdes, the professors of dogmatic and moral theology and physical science in the diocesan seminary. The Reverend M. Niagaro, a canon and archpriest, was appointed president of the commission, The Reverend Canons Tabaries and Gouli were named vice-presidents. The commission nominated a secretary and two assistants from its members.

The work of the commission was to investigate:

1st. If the cures alleged to have been operated, were actually effected by the water of the grotto, and if these cures could be explained naturally, or if they should be attributed to a supernatural cause.

2d. If the visions which Bernadette claimed to have seen, were real, and if so, could they be explained naturally or were they to be considered supernatural.

3d. If the apparition had made demands of the child, and if she had been commissioned to communicate them, and what were the demands.

4th. If the fountain in the grotto existed before the visions, which Bernadette claimed to have seen.

The commission was charged to present only well authenticated facts, and to invite to their conferences for consultation, men well versed in the sciences of medicine, physics, chemistry and geology. In the month of November the commission began its work. After a mass of the Holy Ghost celebrated in the parish church, they summoned Bernadette, and subjected her to a long and minute examination.

The child's testimony, as on all previous occasions, was simple, clear, precise and convincing.

With emotion she portrayed the heavenly lady, recounting in the minutest details, the different phases of the apparitions, and representing in particular, with an indefinable grace, the scene, in which the Blessed Virgin announced that she was the Immaculate Conception. When the president asked her if she would swear to the truth of her assertions, she raised her hand and with great gravity replied:

"I swear it."

Bernadette was required to designate precisely the place, in the niche where the Blessed Virgin appeared,

and the spot which she herself occupied when, for the first time, she saw the vision.

The child indicated these details with a precision and simplicity which accorded perfectly with her previous depositions. In the course of the same day, several persons of Lourdes, who had been cured miraculously at the grotto, were summoned to the pastor's house, to verify by their presence and verbal testimony the facts of their cures.

Doctor Dozous, a physician of the town, who had treated several of these persons during their illness, testified before the commission that medical science could give no satisfactory explanation of these wonderful cures.

The commission carried on its investigation not only at Lourdes but in other localities, where the water had effected miraculous cures. The examination was always conducted in the presence of reputable physicians, and if those physicians cast any doubt on the supernatural character of the cures, the cases were rigorously eliminated.

The commission continued its work for four years, and reported in detail to the Bishop, the result of the long, patient and laborious investigations.

Finally on the eighteenth day of January, 1862, the Right Reverend Bertrand Severe Laurence, Bishop of Tarbes, issued a mandement giving a

decision concerning the apparitions which had taken place at the grotto of Lourdes. Having discussed at length the motives of his decision he formally declared :

"We judge that the Immaculate Mary, Mother of God, has really appeared to Bernadette Soubirous on February 11, 1858, and on subsequent days, to the number of eighteen times, in the grotto of Massabielle, near the town of Lourdes ; that this apparition is invested with all the characteristics of truth, and that the faithful have good ground for believing it to be certain. In order to conform ourselves to the will of the Blessed Virgin—several times expressed by the apparition at that period—we propose to proceed to the erection of a sanctuary on the site of the grotto which has become the property of the Bishops of Tarbes."

CHAPTER VIII

BERNADETTE VISITED BY THOUSANDS—DETAILS OF THE APPARITIONS

Bernadette did not change her ordinary habits of life after the apparitions at Lourdes. She continued to go to the parish school. She was a child as the other children, nothing distinguishing her except her simplicity and piety. She mingled with the others

with a charming abandon, laughed and sang, and played with them.

From one end of France to the other, and throughout neighboring countries, her name was on the lips of millions. She alone seemed to be forgetful of herself, and to be unable to understand the universal interest in her life and doings. In intelligence she was less than the ordinary child, in imagination she was deficient, in manner rather cold and reserved.

Thousands of persons from all parts of the world, of all ranks of society, visited Bernadette and questioned her concerning the apparition. Her recital was always brief and clear. When her statement was disputed, or objections were raised to some details, she was alert and clever in defense of her story, and in refutation of adverse argument. Cross-examination failed to elicit the slightest departure from her narration, and often ended in the discomfiture of able men who were put to silence by her answers, sometimes witty, always gentle and kind. She had a work to do in publishing the details of the apparitions, and the power of God was with her, and enabled her to convince. She submitted with patience to innumerable interviews and interminable questioning.

In ordinary conversation Bernadette showed less than the average intelligence, but when she spoke of the grotto and its associations, she exhibited a charm

and fitness in description which deeply interested her hearers. In reply to a request for a portraiture of the apparition she described her as young, seemingly about sixteen or seventeen years of age, clothed in a brilliant white robe, fastened at the waist by a flowing blue sash as long as the robe. A white veil covered her head, almost concealing her hair, and fell over her shoulders to the ground. Her feet were bare, but covered partly by the folds of her robe, and partly by two large golden roses. On her right arm she wore a rosary of pure white beads, with a chain and cross of brilliant gold, bright as the roses which adorned her feet. She was surrounded by a light of wonderful brightness.

At the first apparition she smiled at the child, and signed to her to approach "as if," said Bernadette, "she was my mother." When the child, scarcely knowing what she did, took her rosary from her pocket, Mary approved by a sign, and took in her fingers the rosary which she wore on her right arm. Whilst Bernadette recited the rosary Mary slipped the beads through her fingers, but uttered no word, till the end of each decade when she said with Bernadette: *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto*. After giving details, Bernadette would add: "She was so beautiful, beautiful, more beautiful than anything in the world." By comparison the child

could not give an adequate idea of what she saw. She was shown the finest satins, the most precious cloths, but she recognized nothing, neither in color nor texture that could be compared to Mary's virginal robe. Several shades of blue were shown to her, but none of them had the color of the cincture worn by Mary, not even was the sky itself so blue in her opinion. Crystals and various precious stones were used for comparison; but the grains of Mary's rosary were more brilliant and transparent. The gold of the chain and crucifix bore no resemblance to the gold of earth. It was something different and far more beautiful. The light by which she was surrounded was more brilliant than the noonday sun. There is no light on earth like it.

When asked if the Blessed Virgin in the apparitions looked at others she replied: "Oh! yes. She looked at all, and even with much affection. Sometimes she seemed to consider persons individually and for certain ones her look rested on them as when one finds a friend."

Bernadette was asked if she was sure that the three secrets confided to her were not known to others, as they were standing near her during the apparitions. She replied: "Oh! I am very sure that no one understood, because when the Blessed Virgin confided the secrets to me, she spoke to me not through my ears,

but through my heart. For those who were around me at the grotto, it was as if one were a hundred yards away from us; this one would know well that we were talking, but would not understand what we were saying."

Although her parents were poor, and were prevented from attending to their ordinary work by the multitudes who visited their home, Bernadette absolutely refused money and donations of every character. She refused with humility but not without clearly indicating that it was useless to insist. No argument, no ruse, no appeal could shake the child's firmness in this respect. Many charitably disposed persons were eager to help the family in their poverty. They found that the parents opposed the same resistance as their daughter, and firmly refused all gifts. It was supposed that this was one of the three secrets confided to Bernadette.

The praises heaped upon her by the crowds who visited her, did not affect her humility and native simplicity. She was called a saint, asked for souvenirs, requested to touch rosaries and to bless objects. Some fell on their knees and asked her benediction. In the midst of these complimentary importunities, she was undisturbed, sweetly smiling, and defending herself often in a very happy manner. When a visitor asked her on an occasion for her

blessing, she replied: "You see well, my good woman, that I do not wear a stole."

The compliments paid to her, in no way affected her simplicity, nor made any impression on her. She was engaged in an apostolate, which propagated devotion to the Mother of God, and she referred all praise to the Immaculate Virgin who chose her for an instrument. Although she suffered continually from asthma, which had afflicted her from early childhood, she received the continual stream of visitors, and patiently recounted over and over again the beautiful scenes of the apparitions.

CHAPTER IX

BERNADETTE BECOMES A NUN—SUFFERINGS AND DEATH

The Sisters of Charity of Nevers, who conducted a hospital at Lourdes, offered to care for Bernadette, whose health was greatly impaired. Her parents acquiesced, and the child left her home to take up her abode with the Sisters. Ostensibly she was at the hospital as an indigent invalid, but in reality she was not subjected to the regime of the sick poor. She had a room apart, bright and healthful, and at table she had a place among the students of the school.

Despite all the care lavished on her, she became feebler in health, and was at the point of death, but rallied, and recovered, but was always ailing.

Innumerable visitors made her life here, from the age of sixteen to twenty-two, a series of receptions. She was always patient, and never refused to see any one. She had, on certain feast days, scarcely time to take her meals. Although she disliked this publicity, she felt that she was an apostle of devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, and recounted over and over the details of the apparition.

In July, 1866, she resolved to become a member of the order of Sisters of Charity. The time arrived for her to bid farewell to the grotto, her family, and the good Sisters, who had cared for her. On the evening of her departure, she repaired to the grotto accompanied by the religious of the hospital. She was very much affected and a torrent of tears poured from her eyes. She prostrated herself on the ground and exclaimed:

"O my mother! my mother! how can I leave you!" The Sisters, witnessing her keen suffering, gently signified that it was time to leave. She asked for another minute. The delay was granted, but finally the Sisters were obliged to take her by the arms and lead her away. With heroic resolution, she forced back the tears, took a last look at the grotto, and

walked quickly towards the town. The Sisters asked her why she was so affected, and if she did not know that the Blessed Virgin was her mother everywhere.

She replied: "O yes, I know it, but at Lourdes the grotto is my Heaven." Her parting with her family was most affecting. On entering her home, she fell fainting into the arms of her mother. She bade each one an affectionate farewell, and then as she heard the carriage wheels rolling up to the door, she tore herself from the arms of her parents, and rushed out, saying several times, "Adieu! Adieu!"

She made a short visit to the hospital to bid good bye to the Sisters with whom she had lived for six years, and departed, never to see Lourdes again.

On July 8, 1866, Bernadette entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity, at Nevers. She received the name of Sister Mary Bernard. Except for the first months of her religious life, she suffered almost continually from physical infirmity. She was at death's door at one time during the first year of her novitiate. She received the last sacraments, and the bishop of the diocese, believing that she was dying, granted her permission to make her religious vows. She recovered, and was able to return to the novitiate. She renewed her vows in solemn profession, in the presence of Monsigneur Farcade, the Bishop of Nevers, in the chapel of the mother house of Saint

Gildard on October 30, 1867. For a short period, she ministered to the sick in the infirmary, but was obliged to relinquish this function of consoling the infirm, which was especially dear to her. The Superior of the convent entrusted her with the care of the chapel of the community. Here she was engaged in light work which did not tax her strength. In this charge she revealed an aptitude that was not suspected in her. She exhibited an exquisite taste in decorating the altars, and became an adept in the use of the needle. There are preserved in the convent, as relics, specimens of embroidery executed by her, which in design and finish are of superior excellence. Her sufferings from physical debility increased day by day. Asthma, rheumatism, tumors, caries of the bone, hemorrhages, caused intense and agonizing pain.

One day a Sister said to her: "I wonder, Sister, that you do not ask to be cured."

"No," she answered, "I am not going to. I am not going to ask for that. Our Lord would say: 'Look at that little nun! she is not willing to suffer anything for Me, Who have suffered so much for her!'"

After twelve years of a model religious life, she made perpetual vows on September 22, 1878. A few days after her final and solemn consecration to God, she was obliged to go to the infirmary, where she

remained till her death. On December 12 she was required to proclaim again, by a last and solemn testimony, the marvels which the Immaculate Virgin had revealed to her at the grotto. Sister Mary Bernard made this last deposition before the representatives of the bishops of Tarbes and Nevers, in presence of the superior general of the congregation of Nevers and his council.

She manifested on this occasion a great joy, which was not usual for her in similar circumstances. She answered willingly a long series of questions. She repeated in a charming manner, in the sweet language of the Pyrenees, the words which fell from the lips of the Immaculate Virgin of the grotto. More than twenty years after these events, in presence of death and eternity, this holy religious affirmed what she had testified as a child. This was her last testimony of the apparitions of the grotto. She could die now, but death did not come; she must suffer still more. The asthma which had embittered her entire life, tortured her by more frequent and acute attacks. A large tumor enveloped her right knee. Caries eat away the marrow of her bones.

The demon attacked her soul, with tortures of conscience, which are like the torments of hell for generous souls who offer themselves as victims for the sins of the world. She had never forgotten Mary's

recommendation, in the grotto, to pray for sinners, and to do penance for them.

Holy week came, and with it a share in the sufferings of her Master.

"What will do you at Easter?" some one asked her.

She answered: "My passion will last till death."

Easter arrived, and with it the joys of the Resurrection, but Sister Mary Bernard was still at Calvary and Gethsemane. On Wednesday of Easter week the devil tempted her violently, as he had tormented God's saints.

She was heard to say several times: "Begone Satan!"

She confided to her spiritual director that when she pronounced the name of Jesus all her fears at the devil's attacks disappeared. On Wednesday, of Easter week, she received the Holy Viaticum.

A Sister who attended her said to her: "I will ask our Immaculate Mother to give you consolation."

"No," she replied, "not consolation, but fortitude and patience."

She remembered the special blessing which Pope Pius IX. had granted her in advance for the hour of her death. She wished to hold the pontifical document in her hand, and in order to gain the plenary indulgence, she pronounced with fervor the name of Jesus.

A moment afterwards she added: "My God, I love you with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength." She repeated in a feeble voice the acts suggested by the prayers for the dying, which were recited by the Sisters. She kissed each of the five wounds of the crucifix which she held firmly in her hands. She made a large sign of the cross, such as she had learned from the Immaculate Virgin at the apparitions in the grotto.

The end was approaching. The Sisters continued to recite prayers. She showed that she was following them. Finally she murmured twice the second part of the Hail Mary, which she had so often recited joyously at the grotto.

A third time she said: "Holy Mary, Mother of God."

She could not finish it.

The Sisters, seeing that she was dying, said: "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist us in our last agony."

Bernadette bowed her head, and gave up her soul to God. It was three o'clock, the hour in which Christ died on the cross. Mary promised that she would make her happy, not in this world, but in the next world. The chalice of bitter suffering was offered her, and she drank deeply. Like all of God's faithful servants, she had the cross for her portion. The

crown followed. Mary's promise has been realized, and she has long since made Bernadette happy in the Kingdom of her Master.

CHAPTER X

THE SHRINE—PROCESSIONS

The Blessed Virgin had requested that a shrine be constructed at the grotto and that the people go there in procession. She said to Bernadette:

"Go to the priests, and tell them that it is my wish that they should build me a chapel here, and that they ought to come here in procession."

Mary's wish has been granted with unexampled generosity. A Basilica, magnificent in architectural design, crowns the Massabielle rocks, which tower sixty feet above the grotto. It is pure Gothic, of the modern type, light and graceful, but solid. From the arches of the interior are suspended countless banners, flags, lamps, ex voto offerings of various designs, representing pilgrimages from all parts of the world.

Behind the altar is a banner from California. On the gospel side of the sanctuary is a United States flag. There are banners from Ireland, England, Mexico, Canada, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Spain and

other countries. Italy's National Pilgrimage bestowed a magnificent lamp of gold and silver. Near it another lamp of artistic design, encircled by shamrocks, tells Ireland's love of Mary. Among the most valuable treasures of the Basilica, is a monstrance of gold, silver and precious gems presented by devout clients of the Mother of God.

In the crypt of the Basilica are countless *ex voto* offerings, and marble slabs bearing inscriptions in French, English, Spanish, German and Italian, testifying gratitude for extraordinary favors.

The Basilica and crypt were found to be utterly inadequate to accommodate the thousands of pilgrims, who poured into Lourdes from all parts of the world. A second church was built, in front of the Basilica, and on a lower level. It is in Roman Byzantine style of architecture, the arches and salient lines being Roman, and the cupola, which surmounts the structure, being Byzantine in character. It is called the Church of the Rosary, and has fifteen chapels in a circle, commemorating the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. Thus the hosts of priests who visit Lourdes, are enabled to celebrate mass, which in certain periods of the year begins at midnight and continues till noon. Mass is also celebrated on solemn feasts, in the grotto.

The grotto which, at the time of the apparitions, was on the banks of the River Gave, is now separated

from it by a large plaza, which affords space for the multitudes who congregate on the occasion of pilgrimages. A railing encloses the grotto. A huge pyramid of hundreds of lighted candles stands near the railing. On the other side of the grotto is a stone pulpit from which many fervorinos on Mary's mercy and power have been pronounced to assembled multitudes. The niche in the grotto holds a beautiful marble statue of the Blessed Virgin, the design being in strict accordance with Bernadette's description of Mary in the apparitions.

The miraculous fountain, from which water is constantly flowing in, is at the left of the grotto. The water is conducted into a low one story building, where the invalids can bathe. In the pilgrimage season, many litters and couches bearing the sick can be seen at the entrance to this Piscina. These litters are carried by brancardiers or attendants, who convey the sick from the station to the hospital, thence to the grotto, waiting their turn at the Piscina, and attending to the wants of the patients. The men who are engaged in this work from morning till night, are not paid servants. They are men who live in Lourdes for some months of the year and devote themselves to this work of admirable charity in a spirit of devotion. One of the Fathers of the grotto superintends the work of this corps of attendants. There is another

organization of hospitalieres, a body of noble women, who volunteer to devote themselves to the women patients. Many cures are operated, especially on the occasion of France's National Pilgrimage.

Thousands of cures have been attested by eminent physicians, who had full knowledge of the cases, and certified that they were beyond the laws of the medical art.

Our Lady's request that the people go to the grotto in procession, has been generously granted. Processions in the form of pilgrimages come from all parts of the world. From April to October organized pilgrimages, under the leadership of bishops and priests, bring thousands to Mary's celebrated shrine. The National Pilgrimage of France which is the largest every year will, in this jubilee year, conduct at least twenty-five trains of people to Lourdes.

The pilgrims spend three or four days in the town. The days are spent in a regular course of exercises, of mass, rosary at the grotto and an instruction, vespers in the Basilica, procession to the grotto. The processions at night are singularly beautiful and impressive. Each of the thousands, who compose them, carry a lighted candle protected from the wind by a shield. The procession winds around the hill from the Basilica and terminates at the grotto. The air resounds with the hymns of the pious pilgrims,

who chant the praises of Mary and the glory of God, with a fervor born of lively, practical faith. Mary, in one of the apparitions said to Bernadette: "You will pray God for sinners; you will kiss the ground for the conversion of sinners." This command was repeated in subsequent apparitions.

The child complied and murmured, "Penance, penance, penance."

The Mother of God sought not only the cure of physical infirmities, but also, and more especially, the diseases of the soul. The conversion of sinners was the principal object of her apparitions. The wondrous blessings which she lavished at the grotto of Lourdes, were for the salvation of souls.

The miracles wrought for the cure of physical diseases are legion and of an extraordinary character in many instances, but the miracles of grace in favor of sinners are beyond human computation, and of greater value, as the supernatural outranks the natural. Only on the great Accounting Day will we be able to appreciate adequately, the countless graces and blessings bestowed on mankind, and particularly on France, by the apparitions at Lourdes of the Refuge of Sinners and the Consoler of the Afflicted, who delighted to call herself the Immaculate Conception.

① Lifting Jesus, lonely
tonight in so many
tabernacles, without
visitor or worshiper.
I offer to thee my loving
heart that its very
pulsation may be a
prayer of love to thee

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT
RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR
BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.



